

WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD

Fairbanks Flight Standards District
Office Honoree 2004



DREW, JAMES, V. Born in New York, New York on September 21, 1930, Jim can recall no real interest in aviation until it was time to join the military in 1952. Shortly after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree From Rutgers University in New Jersey, Jim decided that the best way to face an enemy was from the cockpit of an aircraft. Jim was accepted into the United States Air Force and his flight training as an Aviation Cadet began on July 10, 1952 in the pilot seat of a North American T-6-G at Malden AFB. Jim recalls his first flight with the Air Force Instructor. The instructor told him to takeoff, so he took off. The instructor said to raise the landing gear. Jim said "What?"... All learning starts with the things you don't know. Things went well in the T-6 and, on October 9, 1952, Jim flew his first solo flight. Jim's Air Force tour ended in 1955 at James Conaley AFB. At the time, he was an instructor in both the Lockheed T-33 and the C-8 Flight Simulator.

In 1955, Jim joined the New Jersey Air National Guard and went back to Graduate school at Rutgers University. He spent the summers of 1955-1958 in Barrow, Alaska, working on a soil

survey that was funded by the Navy. Much of this survey was classified, but had to do with recognizing types of terrain from aerial photographs obtained by the military, in the northern latitude countries, such as the USSR. Jim's crew was given photographs and told to code the terrain by physically studying it. The information was used to determine what equipment would be used to wage war on similar terrain in other countries. In the New Jersey Air National Guard, Jim was an Instructor in T-6, T-33, and P-51 aircraft. Jim was very fortunate. About 5 years ago, he found and restored a P-51 in which he had spent time in the cockpit while on active duty for the New Jersey Air National Guard. During his time in the Air National Guard, the Air Force transitioned from prop aircraft to jet aircraft. Jim was part of this transition and remembers problems with the public perception of jets. The people of New York City declared that the new jet propelled aircraft caused a great risk to their well being, so all of T-33 and the F-86 aircraft were moved to Macguire AFB. This caused a problem because now aircrews needed to get to Macguire for training. Jim remembers flying a T-6 or P-51 from Newark Airport to Macguire, completing a mission in the T-33 and F-86, then returning home in a T-6 or P-51, sometimes flying all four aircraft in a single day. In spite of the hectic schedule and the demands placed on Jim to perform safely in different complex aircraft types, he and the rest of the 119th Squadron were presented the Air Force Flying Safety Award. Jim married Marilyn in 1956 and in 1957 he received a PhD from Rutgers University.

Later in 1957, Jim accepted a job at the University of Nebraska as Professor of Agronomy, from which he retired in

1976. During this time, he flew for the Nebraska Air National Guard, and continued flying the F-86, including the F-86-D, which was a solo ship and carried a rocket pod instead of the normal fighter equipment. This aircraft's mission with the Nebraska 173rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron was unique. It's only purpose was to intercept a heavy bomber, which was headed toward the United States, deploy its load of rockets, and hope that a couple of them found their intended mark. Jim recalls that the onboard aiming device needed some time to make the calculations necessary and that it could be defeated if the bomber flew a zigzag course. Luckily, it never became necessary to try this weapon out for the purpose of homeland defense. Jim also flew for the Nebraska 173rd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, flying RF-84 and R-F4-C aircraft. He logged 1300 hours at 450 knots, 500 feet above the ground, on Recon missions. During his time in the military, Jim logged a total of 3596 hours, of which 748 were as an Instructor Pilot. In 1976, he retired from the Nebraska Air National Guard, having spent 24 years of his life in military service to the United States of America.

In 1976, Jim and Marilyn moved to Fairbanks where Jim became employed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks as the Dean of the School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management and Director of the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Jim retired from UAF in 1995. In November 1991, Jim became an FAA Certified Flight Instructor, Instrument Flight Instructor and Ground Instructor. Jim gave flight instruction at Ken Snyder's Aviation Company until 1992, and is still active as an instructor in privately owned

aircraft. He has logged a total of 955 hours as a civilian flight instructor and received the 2004 Alaskan Region Certified Flight Instructor of the Year award.

Jim's continued commitment to safety is manifest in the fact that he is directly involved in no less than eight committees and associations that are directly involved with Aviation Safety and Education.

In his free time, Jim enjoys a flight every now and then in his personally owned Piper Arrow. Jim and Marilyn live here in Fairbanks, and are fortunate that their children Lisa, Kelly, and Michael live here as well.